

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LILONGWE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 308527

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, PFOR, MI, US

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR EMBASSY GOOD OFFICES IN CASE OF
DETAINEE BERNARD HARAWA

REF: LILONGWE 1364

1. MRS. HARAWA, WHO APPARENTLY HAD LEARNED OF RUMORED
CHRISTMAS AMNESTY THROUGH MALAWIAN SOURCES, HAS BEEN
IN TOUCH WITH DEPARTMENT AGAIN THROUGH INTERNATIONAL
LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (ILHR) TO INQUIRE ABOUT HER
HUSBAND'S SITUATION.

2. ON DECEMBER 20, DEPTOFF REACHED MRS. HARAWA AT BILL-
INGS HOSPITAL OF UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. IN CONVERSATIONS
WITH HER AND HER PHYSICIAN, IT WAS LEARNED THAT MRS.
HARAWA HAS JUST BEEN FOUND TO HAVE HODGKIN'S DISEASE, A
FORM OF LYMPHATIC CANCER. EVEN UNTREATED, THE DISEASE'S
PROGRESS IS SLOW, AND HER PROGNOSIS FOR SURVIVING AT
LEAST THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS IS NOT BAD. DOCTOR ADVISES,
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HOWEVER, THAT TREATMENT OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WILL
REQUIRE SEVERAL WEEKS' HOSPITALIZATION, EXPLORATORY
ABDOMINAL SURGERY, RADIATION TREATMENTS AND PROBABLY
CHEMOTHERAPY. THIS REGIME IS BOTH EXPENSIVE AND EXTREMELY
DEBILITATING; IN THE FACE OF HER ILLNESS AND THE BURDEN

OF CARING FOR HER TWO YOUNG CHILDREN, THE ADDED STRESS CAUSED BY HER HUSBAND'S CONTINUED DETENTION OBVIOUSLY WORKS A SEVERE HARDSHIP.

3. LETTERS FROM ATTENDING PHYSICIANS TO PRESIDENT BANDA, GIVING FULL MEDICAL EXPLANATION OF MRS. HARAWA'S CONDITION, ARE BEING SENT TO YOU FOR FORWARDING AT YOUR DISCRETION. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT HER SITUATION IS SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS THAT YOU SHOULD PROBABLY NOT WAIT FOR THE POUCH. WHILE WE ARE AWARE OF BANDA'S FREQUENTLY NEGATIVE REACTION TO OUTSIDE PRESSURE OR ADVICE, WE BELIEVE THAT YOU SHOULD TRY TO SEE THAT THE STORY IS PUT BEFORE HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE MIGHT DECIDE TO ADD HARAWA TO THE CHRISTMAS AMNESTY LIST ON COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS, OR IF THAT LIST IS ALREADY OUT (AND HARAWA NOT ON IT) TO GIVE CASE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.

4. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT YOU SHOULD FORMALLY ASK FOR HARAWA'S RELEASE, BUT REQUEST THAT YOU INQUIRE ABOUT HIS PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ON WIFE'S BEHALF, MAKING FURTHER EXPLICIT REQUEST THAT HER SITUATION AS DESCRIBED ABOVE BE REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT.

5. WE REALIZE THAT HARAWA'S RELEASE IS ONLY HALF THE BATTLE, THOUGH IF BANDA ACCEPTS THE COMPASSIONATE REASONS FOR RELEASE IT WOULD LOGICALLY FOLLOW THAT HE SHOULD PERMIT HARAWA TO JOIN HIS WIFE IN THE US. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE IT MAKES SENSE TO MAKE THE APPROACH AND SEE WHAT COMES OF IT.

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